

CO-OPERATIVE

REVIEW



PROGRAMME EVALUATION UNDERWAY

A formal evaluation of the Co-operative Development Programme will commence in a few months.

The evaluation will be conducted by a consultant organisation (yet to be selected), external to the Ministry.

A Steering Committee has been formed, to advise on the design and conduct of the evaluation, with the following composition:-

Mr M Harrington	- Chairman (Ministry)
Mr T Baldock	- Secretary (Ministry)
Mr D Griffiths	- (Ministry)
Mr J Burke	- (Minister's Secretary)
Hon B Pullen (MLC)	ALP Employment and Training Caucus Committee
Ms J Acton	ALP Economic Policy Committee
Ms B Thyer	Victorian Employment Committee
Mr B Morison	Victorian Employment Committee
Mr A Nelson	Small Business Development Corporation

The Minister for Employment and Training, The Hon. Jim Simmonds, has decided that, as a matter of policy, groups who are in receipt of Government funds and who are "to be evaluated" should not sit on steering committees for evaluations. This policy applies to all the Ministry's funding activities.

This is why there are no co-operative representatives on the steering committee.

Groups who are being funded will, of course, be able to express their opinions to the evaluators, as ALL groups are to be included in the evaluation - co-operatives as well as the Co-operative Business and Education and Training Units. The review practice announced by the Minister in late 1982 will also continue and the information provided will be made available to the steering committee and the evaluators.

The Steering Committee will meet for the first time on 2nd February. It is hoped to finalise an evaluation brief at the meeting, and, subsequently, to select a consultant by about the end of February. It is expected that the evaluation will commence in early March. CDP co-operatives are reminded that the internal review of the programme is continuing and that this will complement the external evaluation.

Co-operatives are asked to prepare and provide submissions on the programme on or before 7th March, 1983. It is then expected that at the end of March a one-day review meeting will be organised. The results of this review process will be made available to the Minister, the evaluation steering committee and the evaluators.

In early February, 1983 a discussion paper and questionnaire will be distributed to all funded co-operatives, inviting responses to a number of issues. Groups will, of course, be able to respond to other issues which they believe are not adequately addressed in the question-

naire.

The questionnaire will cover the CDP Budget, business plans, accountability requirements, funding arrangements, education and training plans, the Co-operative Business and Education and Training Units, consultants, funding committee membership and procedure, job creation in the short and long term, Programme auspice, trade unions and viability.

DAVID GRIFFITHS, Ministry of Employment and Training.



CDP NOTES

Business Plans

Many funded groups seeking continuing funding are experiencing difficulties in preparing their new business plans.

This is symptomatic of the fact that not all groups are effectively using the services of the Co-operative Business, and Education and Training Units. It is surprising that in preparing business plans, co-operatives do not seek the assistance of the Co-operative Business Unit before the plans are submitted to the Ministry for funding. Even when assistance is sought it is sometimes requested on an *ad hoc* and sporadic basis. The Co-operative Business Unit was established to provide a business advisory service for funded groups and it is disappointing that co-operatives do not always avail themselves of the service.

Funding Agreement

A Funding Agreement Form has been instituted for all future funding under the Co-operative Development Programme. The Funding Agreement Form includes details of the specific allocation of loan and/or grant, the payment schedule, the start and end dates for the loan and/or grant and any special funding conditions. There are three attachments to the Funding Agreement Form — a sample statement of expenditure form, sample L2A Form and Programme Objectives and

Funding Conditions.

The Funding Agreement Form has been introduced to streamline the funding contract with co-operatives. Co-operatives will be asked to sign two copies of the Funding Agreement Form. One copy of the form will be returned with the Minister's signature.

Co-operatives are asked to read the Funding Agreement Form very carefully and make sure that they understand their responsibilities under the agreement. Co-operatives are also being asked to record in the minutes of a meeting their acceptance of funding and forward a copy of these minutes to the Minister.

It is expected that the Funding Agreement Form will help to improve communication between the CDP Unit and individual co-operatives.

Taxation

Co-operatives should be aware that grant money for current assets (such as stock and debtors) and fixed assets purchases (e.g., plant and office equipment) could be subject to taxation in the year of receipt. Relevant depreciation and/or investment allowances can be charged against fixed asset grant income.

Consultants

The CDP Unit has initiated discussions

with the Co-operative Business, and Education and Training Units on the use of consultants. Both units have engaged consultants with and/or on behalf of co-operatives. Individual co-operatives have also used their own consultants.

The recruitment of consultants has not, however, been systematic. Discussions are now proceeding as to whether or not the selection of consultants should be placed on a more systematic basis.

The Co-operative Education and Training Unit has made a number of pertinent observations concerning consultants and three of these are as follows:

"It needs to be asked which forms of consultation are most compatible with the goals inherent in the programme."

"Different consultants suit different co-operatives and in the final instance the co-operatives should at all times retain the right of discretion as to the types of service they are willing to accept."

"A centrally appointed and directed group of consultants — one possible option for the future — could well be detrimental to the long term development of independent judgement by the co-operatives."

DAVID GRIFFITHS, Co-ordinator of the Co-operative Development Programme.

CO-OP RADIO PROGRAMMES

The Education and Training Unit has commissioned a member of the Goldfields Radio Co-operative, Mr. Paul Murphy, to produce a series of four tapes on 'Co-operatives in Victoria'. The tapes are expected to be completed in early February and made available to public broadcasting stations throughout Australia.

Long aware of the low level of public awareness of the Co-operative Development Programme and of co-operatives generally, it is the Unit's intention that the project will bring to the public's attention both the history and the distinctive features of co-operative business enterprises. Hopefully this will act to not only improve the public profile of co-operatives but as a genuine contribution to debate concerning specifically the issues confronting co-operatives and working life in general.

The programmes will be organised

around the following four themes.

1. The history of co-operatives.
A brief look at their nineteenth century origins. The C.D.P. programme — Victoria. The new modern interest in co-operatives. The early beginnings of some of the co-operatives in the programme.
2. Why Co-operatives?
Co-operative members discuss the reasons why co-operatives are able to enlist the commitment and support they do.
3. The present-day predicament.
What are the problems presently facing co-operatives. How are co-operatives themselves attempting to address these.
4. Is there a future for co-operatives?
Under what conditions? And in whose interests?

If people have any enquiries about the series they can contact Tony Ayers or Karina Veal at the Vocational Orientation Centre on 348 1586 or 347 7611 ext. 256.

STOP PRESS NEW GROUPS FUNDED

The Minister for Employment and Training the Hon Mr J Simmonds has approved the funding of some new groups under the Co-operative Development Programme.

The co-operatives to receive funding are:-

Multipurpose	\$65,000
(Recommended that money be made available in 83/84 pending availability of funds. No money allocated before next financial year).	
Stawell Work Co-operative	\$5,000
(Immediate funding for remainder of 82/83 financial year.)	
Backyard Press	\$70,560
3PBS	\$78,000
Gay Publications Co-operative	\$70,762
(Funding period for above three groups from now until June '84. Availability of funds in 83/84 financial year subject to continuation of the programme.)	

WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVES IN ITALY



Co-operatives consisting of an all female membership and with exclusively women workers have been established in small numbers throughout the "co-operative world". As the following information about four women's co-operative shows, The co-operatives vary in organisation and actions but have a common thread of acting as a response to women's needs and conditions.

CADIAI — Bologna

In 1974 27 women founded CADIAI, a home help co-op, in Bologna. By 1980 they had 273 members and employed an additional 94 people.

The work done by CADIAI members covers areas such as care of the elderly; looking after those who are handicapped in some way, and it even extends into specialized nursing, so these people are more than just 'home-helps'.

In the beginning CADIAI had some trouble with the local authorities which resented its intrusion into a domain usually considered their own: that of providing social services to the people. Now 13% of its work comes from these same authorities. CADIAI also works for private employers and gives assistance to clinics in the area which caters for patients from overseas.

Every year, funds permitting, the

co-op organises its own training course, consisting of both theoretical and practical classes for the members. Subjects covered are, sociology, paediatrics, child psychology, care of geriatrics and dietetics.

In the future CADIAI hopes to extend its services into wider fields providing canteens, day hospitals, rehabilitation centres etc but this will depend on governmental policies.

AGORA — Bologna

Agora is a medical co-op which was established in Feb. 1980 by a group of 10 women doctors and medical students who wanted to separate themselves from the male-dominated, chaotic Italian medical service. Some of them had already been involved in other feminist medical collectives.

Although they charge their patients (mostly young women) very low fees the co-op is still paying for itself. However, it cannot afford any of the new equipment it needs.

The doctors divide their time between work at their clinic and attending the regular co-op meetings. The three members who are still medical students promote the co-op while the doctors share the general work. All the members

benefit from a discussion of daily experiences.

Agora does not only specialise in offering medical care to women but also organises health education classes for women in trade unions and gives lectures to other co-ops. The members see this as being just as important as the work in their clinic.

LILITH — Naples

Lilith is a co-op of translators and interpreters. In July 1980 a group of women graduates and students of modern languages at university decided that in order to get some work they would set up this co-op. They also aim at improving the professional status of women similar to themselves and want to provide training for other women.

After raising the money needed to start the co-op, even with their low fees, they covered their running costs after one year but cannot afford any extra equipment such as a photo-copier or typewriters. In order to get some of this equipment the women have applied to the EEC for finance. They also hope to be able to implement training programmes with EEC backing. Each member receives 70% of the fee for a particular job. For some it is their first job.

The fact that these women have created their own jobs and managed to proceed so far without financial aid acts as an impressive example for other women who hope to do the same.

LA PANOLE — Arlegna, Udine.

This co-op is run by women who want to keep alive the traditional crafts of their region, such as the making of corn dollies out of dried maize leaves. It was set up in 1978 and has 15 members all of them made homeless by the Udine earthquake. As well as raising money the co-op gave the women an occupation which would keep their minds off their depressing surroundings.

The women not only make the articles but also collect the raw materials and prepare them for use by dyeing etc. None of the women had been paid employees before; most of them were employed in the home. Now they share the different jobs associated with their work and get paid a fee.

All of the members of La Panole see it as being a success although they are not paid much for their long hours of work.

FIONA THORNTON

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As co-operative members are aware, the Co-operative Education and Training Unit fulfills many varied functions including: meeting individual and co-operative training needs; organising group training sessions for several co-operatives; co-operative education; publishing the **Co-operative Review**; producing resource posters and displays; producing promotional radio programmes; developing a library collection on co-operatives and organising the co-operatives conference.

In this issue of the **Co-operative Review** we have included a listing of some of the education and training provided for co-operatives by the Education and Training Unit. The Education and Training Unit regularly visits co-operatives to assist in the assessment of training needs and receive training requests. However, don't forget that co-operatives can telephone the Unit at any time to request further assistance with education and training.

BALLARAT EMPLOYMENT CO-OPERATIVE

- Series of workshops about propagation, ecology, land use (February) *

BOOTSTRAP TRADING CO-OPERATIVE

- Attended salespersons salesmeeting at RMIT September
- Attended workshop on aspects of wholesaling at RMIT September
- Attended workshop on aspects of retailing at RMIT September
- Bookkeeping training from consultant October
- Office systems training from consultant November
- Commenced sewing course in Maryborough November
- Orientation to the Co-operative Development Programme for new co-ordinator January

BRUNSWICK WORK CO-OPERATIVE

- Commenced advanced bookkeeping course at Chisholm TAFE College August
- Advanced camera operation workshop from consultant September
- Attended salespersons salesmeeting at RMIT September
- Attended workshop on aspects of wholesaling at RMIT September
- Financial education session for all workers October
- Attended educational session on the Australian economy at RMIT November
- All day educational/planning session for workers, directors and members November
- Attended educational session on co-operatives and social change at RMIT December

CORRECT LINE GRAPHICS

- Commenced advanced bookkeeping course at Chisholm TAFE College August
- Assistance with assessing problems in production planning September
- Advanced camera operation workshop from consultant September
- Workshop in aspects of design principles for printing from consultant December

- Workshop in aspects of colour work preparation from consultant December

FRANKSTON MOTOR CYCLE PARK CO-OPERATIVE

- Commenced first aid course at Dandenong October
- Assistance with enquiries concerning apprenticeships

GOLDFIELDS COMMUNITY RADIO CO-OPERATIVE

- Training workshop for station volunteers December
- Attended Education session on co-operatives and social change December
- Advanced training workshop (February)

HODJA EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES CO-OPERATIVE

- Attended salespersons salesmeeting September
- Attended workshop on aspects of wholesaling at RMIT September
- Attended workshop on aspects of retailing at RMIT September
- Commences computer usage course at CAE (February)
- Session on assessment of manuscripts with reading consultant (February)

ITALO-AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT CO-OPERATIVE

- Commenced advanced bookkeeping course at Chisholm College of TAFE August
- Workshop session on kitchen organisation January
- Training session in specialist cooking January

LOCHARD TRADING CO-OPERATIVE

- Attended salespersons salesmeeting at RMIT September
- Attended workshop on aspects of wholesaling at RMIT September
- Attended educational session on co-operatives and social change December

MULTI PURPOSE CO-OPERATIVE

- Meetings to discuss education and training needs. No action taken since co-operative is not yet operational

OPEN CHANNEL CO-OPERATIVE

- Meetings to formulate education and training plan. Areas of specific need under discussion for action

PUBLIC IMAGES

- Attended salespersons salesmeeting at RMIT September
- Information presented on murals in Australia September
- Financial training sessions with consultant October
- Attended educational session on co-operatives and social change December

SYBYLLA PRESS

- Commenced bookkeeping course at Chisholm College of TAFE August
- Workshop in camera operation with consultant August
- Workshop in principles of graphic design with consultant September
- Attended salespersons salesmeeting September
- Attended workshop on aspects of wholesaling September
- Attended workshop on aspects of retailing September
- Attended educational session on co-operatives and social change December
- Workshop on machine repair and maintenance January
- Information session on aspects of publishing (February)

TURKISH WOMENS CO-OPERATIVE

- Meetings to discuss education and training needs. No action taken since co-operative is not yet operational

WANDERFOOD

- Attended workshop on aspects of retailing at RMIT September
- Commences food handler course at RMIT October
- Commences bookkeeping course (February)
- Commences course in specialist cooking (February)

*Brackets () signify training planned but not yet undertaken.

YOUTH LABOUR MARKET

YOUTH LABOUR MARKET SEMINAR December 6, 1982 A Reflection

A half-day seminar organised by the Vocational Orientation Centre to disseminate information on the youth labour market was held in early December 1982. The main purposes of the seminar were to

- provide access to a new AV resource 'Jobs on the Slide'.
- bring together a wide range of community workers to foster broad based discussion on the issues.
- mount a display of resources — books, articles and videos — on current youth labour market issues.

A wide range of community workers attended from CYSS groups, schools, transition programmes, English language and settlement centres. One of the major benefits of the seminar was the opportunity to meet with a variety of workers and share different perspectives and approaches to the situation.

The programme focussed initially on the AV production 'Jobs on the Slide'. This slide/tape kit details the changes that have occurred in the teenage labour market in the last decade, explores some of the reasons for these changes and addresses some of the policy implications arising from the current situation. Richard Sweet (NSW Dept. of TAFE) who co-produced this AV slide kit and has conducted much research in the area, contributed a statistical update based on the most recent findings.

As can be seen, the picture and prospects for young women proved to be particular-

THE LABOUR FORCE IN AUSTRALIA IN 1982 (SOURCE: ABS)

Unemployment Rates (%)			
All Persons	7.0	6.6	7.8
All Males	5.7	5.7	6.7
All Females	10.0	8.2	8.3
Married Females	6.1	5.6	5.8
Not Married Females	13.9	10.8	10.5
Youth (15-19)	20.2	17.3	17.1
Males	17.4	15.6	16.3
Females	24.0	19.3	18.1
Persons born in Australia	7.1	6.4	—
Persons born outside Australia	6.9	7.1	—

ly gloomy. Richard Sweet stressed the urgent need to continue work in expanding the options available to girls if they are to successfully compete with boys for the decreasing number of jobs available. The traditional areas for girls — general office work and retail work — were shown to be ever diminishing or swallowed up by part-time, casual workers, often still at school.

Although the overall picture is not new, the dimension of the problems, the effects, as well the pressing need for a wide range of responses was certainly well articulated. With the 1982 school-leavers now confronting this bleak scene, the problems escalate and intensify further. The Age's recent series on the "Recession Generation" certainly personalises the crisis faced by many young people and reveals a collective air of doubt, anxiety and despair.

Given this context and in the light of

many comments from those attending the December seminar, it is apparent that the complex issues of the labour market decline and our responses to it, demand further analysis and debate.

Another seminar will be run in April this year, focussing more directly on different responses to the situation. It is envisaged that representatives from government sponsored programmes e.g. SYETP, MEAT Employment Initiatives programme, Co-operative Development Programme, Migrant Centres, TAFE transition, etc, as well as spokespeople from local community programmes be invited to attend and that seminar participants have more time to explore and discuss implications of these programs.

Organisation of this seminar is underway. Your ideas, enquiries, resources, would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Jill Blyth at Vocational Orientation Centre, 42 Cardigan St., Carlton. Ph. 347 7611 Ext 256.

SOFTWARE FOR MICROCOMPUTERS

In the last issue of the "Co-operative Review", Part 1 of this article ("Microcomputers for Small Business") established a framework for examining the use of microcomputers in small businesses. The article stressed that a careful review of current practices is required before making a decision on computerisation. Each potential application must be independently evaluated. If computerisation is recommended, the implementation sequence should be:

1. Fully define the present and desired procedures
2. Select the specific software required
3. Select the correct hardware.

Although software might be programmed by the user, by an outside consultant or by a service bureau, a small business will most often select programs from the vast array of off-the-shelf software packages. This approach has the dual advantages of cost and ease of use; you don't need to know a complicated computer programming language to use most commercial programs.

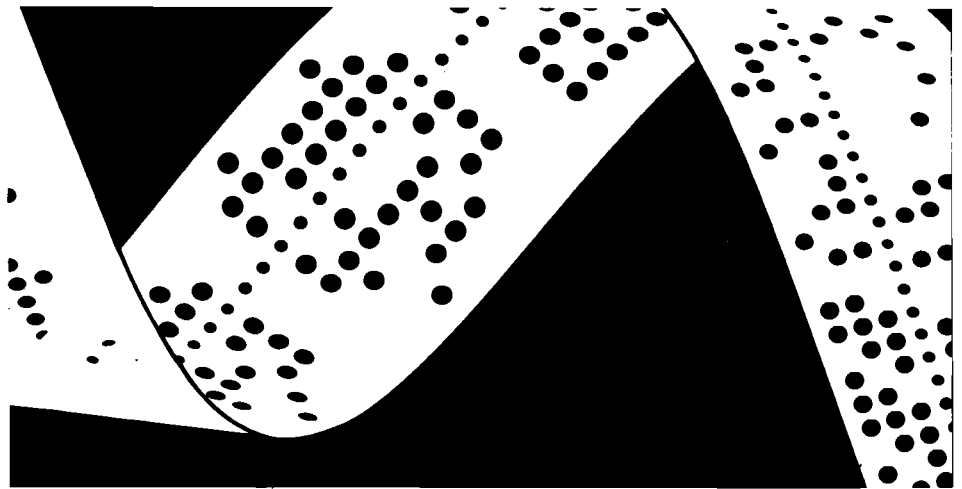
Part 1 listed these packages in 5 major and 25 minor generic categories. This part will discuss each of these categories to assist you to identify possible applications for further study.

Administrative and General Systems

Word processing can be efficiently performed on either micros or dedicated word processors. Both can produce error-free copies more quickly and easily than done manually. Their efficiency shows up best when documents must be edited or changed, e.g., on contracts, specifications, personalised form letters, reports, etc. Addition of a high quality printer (\$2,000-\$4,000+) will be required if impressive documents or letters are to be produced. A dedicated word processor would be favoured over a micro when a consistently high volume of output is anticipated.

Computerisation is probably essential if you maintain a large mailing list, particularly if it changes frequently. Most programs allow coding to facilitate some minimal sorting of the list (by product, mail code, etc.), but can differ significantly on speed, ease of use, and flexibility. Most systems easily handle 600 to 1,000 names; lists of 30,000 or more may also be handled, but typically require some additional hardware expense. Bear in mind that many micro systems are "off-line" when printing, shutting off other users.

Computerised filing and retrieval sys-



tems, sometimes called "database management systems", allow the selection and sorting of filed information in a variety of ways (say, customers by product purchased or by suburb). If you keep detailed records and require cross-referencing of information contained therein, a properly designed and sized micro database system might be useful. Several commercial programs such as "dBase II", "DMS" and "pfs:" allow user-friendly database management, with complete systems costing in the \$400 to \$1,000 range.

A word of caution: database management systems require careful prior planning. Firstly, micros are not designed to handle vast files of data; in many cases, the more data, the slower the system runs. In addition, design of over-rigid data structures can significantly cut down on the flexibility and usefulness of the system, and can prohibit later expansion.

Depending upon your needs, computer graphics systems can either stand alone or support other systems. High quality full-colour graphics printers for micros are now reasonably priced (\$2,000+). They not only draw business graphs, pie-charts, and the like, they can reproduce photographs, perform three-dimensional modelling, and draw virtually anything imaginable. Micrographic animation packages are also available. It might be noted that entire new industries are arising from advances in computerised graphics.

A wide variety of special purpose business software (e.g., investment portfolio analysis, tax preparation, personnel records and others) is also available for general business use.

Financial Systems

A number of available software packages can be used quite easily to generate such

essential financial documents as profit and loss statements, cash flows, business plans, forecasts, budgets, and the like. The basic idea is that you set up a grid of numbers and calculations on the video monitor screen to suit your needs: changing one number (cell) will automatically adjust all related numbers.

The widely used first separation packages such as "VisiCalc" and "SuperCalc" are now being challenged by a new generation of business form processors such as "Versaform" and "Multiplan" in the same \$250 to \$600 price range. These programs enable one to design forms for various purposes (e.g., invoices, stock reports, etc.) on the computer. More powerful programs such as "Micro-modeller", "Microplanner" and "MARS" are available as well, but may cost 2 to 3 times more.

These micro software tools can quickly generate meaningful financial ratios such as return on sales and day's sales in inventory: their use is primarily limited by the user's imagination (and knowledge of the program). They can be invaluable in fulfilling the fundamental role of the financial function, the supply and control of business funds. The planning discipline enforced by the programs and the professional reports produced can make a strong statement on your behalf when seeking funding.

Accounting Systems

Although many small businesses do not maintain a consolidated general ledger summarising all activities, assets, and liabilities, these records typically are kept in some form. Use of a general ledger is particularly beneficial when you track the budgets and transactions of several cost centres, need close monitoring and analysis of cash, process a large volume of transactions, or produce periodic reports

for governmental or other bodies. One useful product of most micro systems is a trial balance which shows whether debits and credits are in balance. Other reports include periodic operating statements and lists of transactions for analysis or audit.

Whereas mainframe systems typically integrate the general, accounts payable and accounts receivable ledgers, micro-based systems may use separate stand-alone systems due to data storage constraints.

Micro payroll systems, while available, merit considerable thought before plunging. In the first place, they probably wouldn't save money unless there are 30 to 40 employees or more. Secondly, security with micros can be a problem. Thirdly, few micros in small business have backup systems; try explaining why cheques are late some day. Fourthly tax laws seem to change frequently, requiring reprogramming. Lastly, most computer bureaux perform the task quickly and inexpensively.

Fixed assets can be tabled, and depreciation calculated as required, by microcomputers.

Marketing Systems

Computers and marketing fit together well. From sending advertising messages through mass mailing or catalogs, to attention-gathering messages at the point of sale, to maintenance and analysis of customer or market data, microcomputers can help to focus customer attention on your goods or services.

Operations Systems

If you stock a number of different items, monitor stock levels; have maximum and reorder points; need to know what's in stock quickly; keep track of raw materials, work-in-progress, or finished goods; or monitor and adjust the capital value of stock on a regular basis manually, you may benefit from a computerised stock control system. Inventory control is a well-developed market for micro software: beware, however; in many cases, embarking on computerisation has meant a drastic revision of warehousing/storeroom procedures.

Micros have been successfully used in process control, productivity measurement and general design and programming work in technology-oriented businesses. Typical languages on microcomputers include Basic, Fortran, Cobol, Pascal, Logo, Assembler, and many others. Users of packaged software need not be programmers, but competency in a language

can greatly extend your use of a micro.

The use of microcomputers in training has two meanings: firstly, micros can be used as teacher substitutes to reinforce traditional techniques. Computer Aided Instruction (CAI) is now well documented and well supported with software packages. If training is a major part of your business, give some thought here. The second meaning is somewhat more socially significant and involves teaching people to accept and use computers. At eleven years, my son has already studied computers in school for two years and is quite comfortable with them. The world in 10 to 15 years will be full of adults with that trait; will it be nirvana or . . . ?

Sources for Further Information

One hasn't far to look for a plethora of information on microcomputers in business: magazines, books, consultants, and vendors abound. Two Australian newspapers, Pacific Computer Weekly and Computerworld, while oriented to a technical audience, are full of news on microcomputer systems and new products. The following magazines are readily available:

- COMDEC, Business Technology
- Your Computer
- Australian Business Computer
- Creative Computing
- Micro Decision (U.K.)
- Australian Personal Computer
- Interface Age (U.S.)
- Byte (U.S.)

All of these magazines often have useful articles written for prospective computer users. One such article appearing in the June 1982 Interface Age entitled "Ten Steps to Take Before You Buy a Computer", by Dona Z. Meilach, is available from the Education and Training Unit.

Among the numerous introductory computer books are the following: R. Morris, Computer Basics for Managers, 1980, Business Books Ltd.
P. Rodwell, Personal Computers, 1981, Anchor Press Ltd., UK
F. Mims III, Beginners Guide to Personal Computers, 1981, Tandy.

Choosing the Appropriate Software

Will any of the applications discussed suit your co-operative? If so, your study of microcomputers must now become serious. Examine the 8-bit micros and the new generation of 16-bit micros just now hitting the market. Do you need the extra computing power, memory and speed (at higher cost)?

Operating systems control the functioning of the computer system. The industry standard for micro business

applications is called "CP/M"; CP/M systems have access to the largest number of software packages. If your computer is strictly for business, you might stick with CP/M. But if you envisage multiple uses for your micro (for example, recreation or education), be aware that many business software programs have been written for other operating systems as well.

Now you can select the specific software needed. Read the documentation carefully before making a decision; check with experienced users; observe the short-listed systems in action, if possible, read magazine reviews of the possibilities.

Summary

Microcomputers are simply tools. They have no meaning in a business environment by themselves until joined with the software, the perceived need, and the user. The total system requires careful analysis and planning if it is to be successfully implemented.

Determine your business system needs first. After selecting the appropriate software, carefully define your hardware requirements. Make sure the computer is powerful enough to operate your chosen programs. Allow for future expansion.

Now your problems begin. To start with, microcomputers require training, so some lead time must be allowed. Unless someone in your co-operative is prepared to learn — really learn — the system, grief may not be far away. Also, user discipline is important. Computers demand constant attention: disks must be organised, data must be regularly backed up. Sufficient time must be allowed for a transition from manual to computerised methods. If your existing systems are illogical, the transition will be made somewhat harder.

As time passes, you may find unacceptable limitations in the systems selected. Additional hardware or software may be required. Systems may not perform as advertised. Computerisation costs can be appreciably higher than expected.

The transition period may take as long as a year or more. If your planning and execution were based upon a sound analysis of your business and its needs, you should find that the micro applications selected will make a meaningful contribution to you, your fellow workers, and your organisation.

RAYMOND W. SARLIN

CO-OPERATIVE REPRESENTATIVES ELECTED

For the benefit of those co-operative members unable to attend, here follows a copy of the minutes of the meeting held between co-operatives in the Co-operative Development Programme on the morning of December 6th, 1982.

Present:

Graham Willett, (Correct Line Graphics), Rod May (Central Victorian Tree Planting), Tony Gill (Central Victorian Tree Service), Erwin Faint (Loch Ard, Co-operative), Paul Martin (Loch Ard, Co-operative), Pam Jewell (Loch Ard, Co-operative), Joy Smith (Loch Ard, Co-operative), Sally Carey (Loch Ard, Co-operative), Terry White (Bootstrap Co-operative), Jeff Langdon (Goldfields Community Radio), Paul Murphy (Goldfields Community Radio), Ron Harper (Hodja Educational Resources), Stephen Pascoe (Hodja Educational Co-operative), Rowena Butterick (Hodja Educational Co-operative), Susan Watson (Hodja Educational Co-operative), Maura Kidney (Brunswick Work Co-operative), Jack Cleary (Frankston Motor Cycle Park Co-operative), Margaret Beaumont (Frankston Motor Cycle Park Co-operative), Mary-Anne Smith (Public Images Co-operative), Steven Kingshott (Public Images Co-operative), Karina Veal (Education & Training Unit), Tony Ayers (Education & Training Unit), Brian Greer (Business Advisory Service).

Apologies:

Bob Clutterbuck, Jane Freeston and Kieran O'Mullane from B.W.C. Joanne Sarling B.A.S.

The first item discussed at the meeting was the nature of co-operative representation on committees such as the Funding Committee Co-operative representatives currently sitting on committees outlined the roles and responsibilities of representation.

It was moved that:

"This group of Victorian employment co-operatives endorses the 18th September 1982 request of Brunswick Work Co-operative and seeks an immediate response to the request for payment for sitting fees for co-operative representatives on the various government committees connected with the Co-operative Development Programme".

Moved: Terry White

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Seconded: Paul Martin - passed unanimously.

Election of Representatives

All current representatives resigned.

It was moved that

"This meeting will hold elections for the vacancies on the Funding and Loans Committees. This meeting recommends that the number of representatives on the Funding Committee be increased to five with three representatives having voting rights at any one time".

Moved: Karina Veal

Seconded: Graham Willett - passed unanimously.

The five representatives then elected were:

Ron Harper	Hodja Educational Resources Co-operative
Jack Cleary	Frankston Motor Cycle Park Co-operative
Jeff Langdon	Goldfields Community Radio Co-operative
Andrea Phillip	Open Channel Co-operative
Tony Gill	Ballarat Employment Co-operative

It was moved that.

"This meeting accepts the five named representatives as elected unopposed and that they shall decide, between themselves, the attendance schedule of Funding Committee meetings".

Moved: Jeff Langdon

Seconded: Terry White - passed unanimously

The meeting further moved.

"That there should be a two meeting overlap between the old and new representatives".

Moved: Maura Kidney

Seconded: Susan Watson - passed unanimously

Loans Committee

The Loans Committee allows for four co-operative representatives.

Those elected were:

Paul Martin	Loch Ard Trading Co-operative
Jack Cleary	Frankston Motor Cycle Park Co-operative
Susan Watson	Hodja Educational Resources Co-operative

Leaving one position vacant, to be filled later.

It was moved:

"That Terry White, on behalf of this meeting, present the results of this meeting to the Ministry of Employment & Training".

Moved: Susan Watson

Seconded: Maura Kidney - passed unanimously.

The final matter for discussion was that of the possibilities/problems of communicating between the co-operatives themselves on matters of common interest.

It was moved that

"This meeting notify the Ministry of Employment and Training that there is an association of co-operatives and that all communication to the co-operatives on matters of co-operative policy be directed the co-operatives association through the offices of the Business Advisory Service".

Moved: Jeff Langdon

Seconded: Paul Martin - passed unanimously.

Meeting closed 12.15 pm.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

Canada

The Co-operative Future Directions Projects' **Working Papers** series will be continued during the next three years. The current series is almost complete. The publications explored such topics as improving board/management relations, co-operative control structures, workplace changes, energy conservation technology, and co-operative initiatives in new areas. They helped keep co-operators informed about important new development in co-operatives and in the environment they serve. Now, the Co-operative College of Canada has announced it is preparing to initiate a new **Working Papers** series, to be edited by Jack Craig. Starting in January, 1983, the college plans to publish six titles a year for three years. Subscription rates are \$20 per year. Charter subscriptions (three years) are \$50. Information about the series is available from Skip Kutz, director, curriculum and studies, Co-operative College of Canada, 141 - 105th Street, Saskatoon, Sask. S7N 1N3.

Copies of the **Working Papers** are available for loan from the Co-operative Education and Training Unit.

United Kingdom

Two major initiatives relating to the development of workers co-operatives in Wales and involving the Co-operative Bank, the Wales Trade Union Council and government were announced last week. A Development and Training Centre for worker co-operatives in Wales, as outlined by the Wales TUC in their report, "Co-operation and Job Creation in Wales; A Feasibility Study" has received government backing. The Secretary of State for Wales announced in the British Parliament the offer of a grant of 100,000 pound to help establish the centre. The money will be spread over three years beginning in 1983.

The Wales TUC report, which was published last year, called for the government to contribute finance to support the establishment of a Mondragon-style system of workers co-operatives in Wales. The report argued that a centre bringing together a range of technical expertise for new co-ops to draw upon was vital to a significant expansion of the co-op sector in Wales. No doubt that the energy, skills and imagination of thousands of workers in Wales — both employed and unemployed — are waiting to be tapped. Very successful co-op sectors exist elsewhere in Europe generating thousands of jobs and interest in worker co-ops has been growing very rapidly in the last few years in Wales. This grant will start the process of building up an active and professional body which can shape and develop a strong co-operative sector in Wales, and assurances from the EEC, that funds to supplement this initial 100,000 pounds are available, have been noted.

Poland

Stanislaw Kukuryka, President of the Central Union of Housing Co-operatives of Poland, has been named Minister of Housing in Poland and takes up his duties this month. Kukuryka said, when he went on the television to accept the post of Housing Minister, that he was first a co-operator. In his ministry, his loyalties would continue to be with the development of Co-operative Housing.

The housing co-operatives in Poland constitute a large part of the construction scene. They are estimated to produce as much as 75 percent of the new multi-family housing construction. Kukuryka said that one of the drives in the coming years would be to increase the amount of production by the co-operatives of single family homes, or attached houses similar to the town houses in the United States.



A Report now published which was commissioned by the EEC shows that there are more than 500,000 people employed in Workers' Co-operatives in Western Europe and the numbers are growing rapidly.

In Italy alone there are 5,000 "producer co-operatives" employing 350,000 people and the rapid growth in that country is helped by co-operatives enjoying exemption from local taxes and the existence of a \$80 million Co-operative Development Fund which will provide up to 70% investment in a new co-operative at 4½% interest for the first \$30,000 (market rate of interest beyond that).

In France there are 35,000 people working in 900 co-operatives and again there is evidence of a rapid up-surge in growth since 1975. Co-operatives have some advantages under French law. They can re-invest part of their profit into a "workers participation fund" free of corporation tax or personal taxes and an equal proportion of profit (also tax-free) into an investment reserve. The law also requires that when public contracts are put out to tender preferences must be given, prices being equal, to worker co-operatives and that where possible the contracting authority (state, local authority or public service) should break the work, service or goods it requires down into lots a quarter of which should be offered to workers co-operatives at the *average price*.

Since 1978 the law in France has also provided that local authorities can grant direct subsidies to worker co-operatives whilst being prohibited from contributing in any form towards the capital of private undertakings. This example of

positive discrimination is justified on the grounds that no private individual can appropriate the co-operative's capital reserves since, by law, assets in the event of dissolution do not go to the members but, as is usual with worker co-operative Model Rules, go to other co-operatives or to "SCOP", the French confederation of worker co-operatives.

After Italy and France, Britain has seen the greatest growth in worker co-operatives in recent years with over 400 Common Ownerships registering through ICOM, mainly new enterprises.

In fact starting from a very low base, a total of 30 worker co-operatives in 1975, the rate of growth in the UK has been greater than that in France; surprising since UK law offers none of the incentives available in France or Italy.

The interest of the EEC Commission in having the study done lay in the employment creating potential of worker co-operatives. The fruit of the research did not suggest that co-operatives offered a solution to the problem of unemployment in Western Europe but did suggest that they could make a contribution. In all countries the total number of jobs had been maintained and new jobs created. 15 - 17,000 a year in Italy, 1,500 a year in Holland and Spain. Insignificant numbers in view of the scale of the problem but who knows what could happen if just 1% of the money spent on maintaining unemployed people was diverted to helping them create employment through co-operation.

From: **Newsletter Industrial Common Ownership Movement (UK)**, May, 1982.

MULTILINGUAL VOCATIONAL INFORMATION

For many H.S.C. students and their parents, January is a very significant month of the year. Many would be confronted with a situation of making far-reaching decisions that will affect their futures, decisions such as choosing a career, a course of study or, for those who have not passed H.S.C., deciding whether to repeat H.S.C., look for work or take up one of the many Year 12 options available, and assessing what those choices mean to them. A large number of people – "the lucky ones" by this stage would already know what they would like to do and would very likely be offered a place in a course or career of their choice.

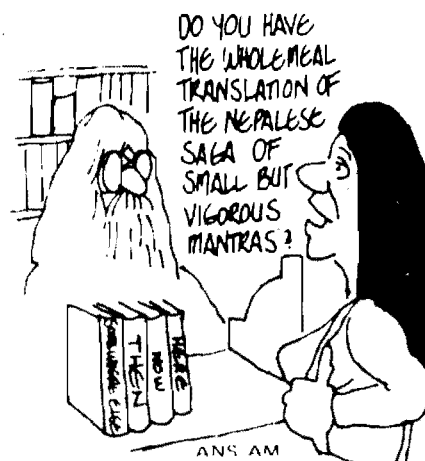
Choosing a career and knowing what educational options are open to a person is not an easy task and involves a good deal of exploration, gathering informat-

ion, and assessing the appropriateness of various careers and or courses to the particular individual. For many migrants this situation is exacerbated by the fact that most of them are faced with an unfamiliar education system and experience, cultural and language difficulties that make it extremely difficult for them to make well considered choices. In order to help overcome some of these difficulties and to promote awareness, the V.O.C. has prepared a series of five programmes which are to be broadcast over five weeks beginning on 26 January 1983 on 3EA Ethnic Radio. The programmes will be broadcast in three community languages – Turkish, Italian and Greek.

The five programmes will deal in some detail with issues involved in choosing a career, apprenticeships, repeating H.S.C., undertaking alternative Year 12 courses as well as T.A.F.E. options. Listeners, as well as other interested people in the community are encouraged to use V.O.C. and other resources, while non-English speaking people can also use the resources of their particular ethnic community

groups and agencies.

Printed copies of the programmes in English, Italian, Turkish and Greek will be available from the V.O.C. in early February. For these contact Erik Lloga at the V.O.C. on telephone: 347 7611 ext. 256/7.



Teenage Employment in Australia

JOBS ON THE SLIDE is a 3-part audio-visual kit containing a total of 95 frames, a cassette and leaders guide. Published September 1982.

This kit looks at the changing teenage job market over the last ten years. It reveals the steady fall in the number of full-time teenage jobs (especially for girls), the boom in part-time jobs, the causes of these changes and the implications for education and social welfare policy.

The kit is based on research work carried out by Richard Sweet of the NSW Dept. of TAFE and provides an excellent background to discussion on the options available for teenagers.

JOBS ON THE SLIDE is available for previewing or loan from the Vocational Orientation Centre or can be purchased from Environment Audio Visuals, PO Box 87, Fitzroy North. Ph. 481 8542.

COMPUTER CRAFT

In December 1981 I visited a small workers' co-operative in London (U.K.) called Computercraft. It is one of a number of recently established workers' co-operatives in Britain doing computer work. At the moment 6 computer programmers are the worker members of Computercraft.

What type of work do they do?

When I visited them there were 3 main jobs in progress. The first, fairly technical job was for another microcomputer business, rewriting some BASIC programs into assembly language (the 'machine' language) on an Apple 11 microcomputer (BASIC is a computer language; microcomputers are relatively inexpensive desktop computers). The other two jobs were a patient record system for a hospital and a despatching-invoicing system for a publications distributor.

In general Computercraft work mainly as contract programmers both to other computer businesses and to end-users. They also work as microcomputer consultants, advising on whether or not to computerise, and which microcomputer system, both hardware (machine) and software (programs), to buy. They have given free consultancy to community groups. They have also developed some computer games including ones called "Life" and "Worms", and they write articles on computing.

Office Atmosphere

The members of Computercraft have a work situation which gives them a considerable amount of personal freedom. The in-house jobs allow members to choose their own work hours — for example, while I was there some members were starting work late in the day and working well into the night. Around 7 p.m., usually, the colour monitor of their microcomputer was turned over to the next "Doctor Who" TV episode, for some light relief. There was also a small stove and fridge allowing you to fix yourself up with a light meal. They have a telephone answering machine so that the office doesn't have to be staffed throughout the day. They also have a sensible system of passing messages received for a member who was out at the time: there are standard message forms (to; from; received by; time/date; phone-back no.; message) and each member has an in-mail tray for their mail and messages. The

co-op has built up a small library of computer magazines and books and product information; and, of course, they have built up a collection of software for their microcomputer.

Non-hierarchical Organisation

Each member was capable of finding contract work for Computercraft and so no member was directly dependent on another member for their work. On the other hand, many jobs were handled by 2 or more members. Each member in turn was responsible for the collective office jobs — recording minutes of meetings, bookkeeping, answering group correspondence.

Computercraft experimented with an office practice of "backing-up". The idea is that for each project there should be a member of the co-op not working on the project who "backs-up" the project. That member should understand the broad outline of the project and know its current progress; there should be a check on the others' work on the project, capable of standing in or taking over if they are sick, and be a source of encouragement and advice.

Computercraft aimed to hold fairly business-like meetings to deal with day-to-day business, and they scheduled special open-ended meetings to discuss policy.

Wages

Computercraft wages have been quite low. This is partly due to the fact that they are experimenting a lot of the time with different types of work. At present they have only been going two years and still need to spend a fair amount of time hunting up work. Initially members received equal wages, but with demands by some members to be able to work harder and earn more, this has changed.

Computercraft see themselves as a resource to community organisations prepared to do a certain amount of consultancy free. They have a principle of doing only socially acceptable work and they withdrew from a contract where it was considered their work on a microcomputer system would directly cause redundancies. They would like to establish business links with other co-operatives.

Computercraft members seem convinced about the value of their experience to date together, despite problems. They emphasize the learning involved in working for themselves — the technical computing skills and the industry awareness



and competence they have been able to develop. To an outsider sitting in on a general issue meeting they also seemed skilled at communicating with each other over sensitive issues and strong points of view.

PETER ILBERY N.S.W. from Worklink.

MEETINGS YOU CAN ATTEND

Co-operative members are most welcome to attend the regular Education and Training Planning Group meetings at the VOC. The meetings take place on Tuesdays 4pm–6pm at the Vocational Orientation Centre, 42 Cardigan Street, Carlton. Phone 347 7611 Ext 255

Meeting dates are:

February 8th
February 22nd
March 8th
March 22nd

April 5th
April 19th
May 3rd

CO-OPERATIVES AND SOCIAL CHANGE

A weekend conference. Why do we want change? Can we talk of a co-operative movement? What commitment do co-operatives require? What industrial possibilities/problems do co-operatives present. Is it all worthwhile?

The weekend will focus on some issues pertaining to co-operatives through speakers, panels, discussion, films etc. The emphasis will be on discussion and input from the Victorian co-operatives.

Free for members/workers/directors of co-operatives in the Co-operative Development Programme. Organised by the Co-operative Education and Training Unit.

From Friday February 11th 1983 – Sunday February 13th 1983. At Erskine House, by the beach at Lorne, Victoria.

